

Message Text

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ACTION PM-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 NSC-07 SP-03 SS-20 RSC-01 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5121

SECDEF PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

USCINCEUR PRIORITY

S E C R E T ATHENS 6116

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (MRN 6116 VICE 6056)

3.O. GDS

TAGS: MASS, IT, TU, GR, GW, US

SUBJECT: PROPOSED TRANSFER OF F-104'S TO TURKEY

REFS: A. STATE 183768; B. ROME 11559

1. WE NOTE FROM REFTELS TRANSFER OF ITALAIN F-104 A/C AND, PERHAPS, TF-104 /C FROM FRG TO TURKEY UNDER CONSIDERATION. A FACTOR IN THIS SITUATION WHICH OUGHT TO BE CONSIDERED PRIOR TO GOI, AND PERHAPS FRG, APPROVALS OF SALES AND USG APPROVAL OF TRANSFER, RATHER THAN AFTERWARD AS MIGHT BE CASE UNDER NORMAL CONDITIONS, IS HOW DELIVERY TO BE EFFECTED.

2. ONE OF PROBLEMS WITH WHICH WE ARE NOW GRAPPLING IN THIS PERIOD OF CONTINUING TENSION BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY, AND OF SOME STRAIN IN US-GREEK RELATIONS, IS GOG RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF AIRSPACE AND AIR FACILITIES. WHAT IN PAST HAD BEEN REGARDED AS ROUTINE US AIR FORCE AND NAVY FLIGHT OPERATIONS ARE BEING

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SUBJECTED TO EVER-CHANGING RESTRICTIONS, WITH CONSISTENT ELEMENT

OF VIRTUALLY TOTAL BAN ON TRANS-AEGEAN FLIGHTS. ANY US MILITARY FLIGHTS BOUND FOR TURKEY, THEREFORE, MUST EXIT ATHENS FIR INTO NICISIA FIR BEFORE THEY CAN ENTER TURKISH AIRSPACE. DESPITE GREATER DISTANCE TO BE FLOWN, THIS IS ONLY INCONVENIENT AND MORE EXPENSIVE BUT NOT PROHIBITIVE FOR MOST AIR TRAFFIC.

3. IN ORDER TO AVOID UNNECESSARY EXACERBATION OF US-GREEK RELATIONS, WE AHVE RECOMMENDED THROUGH US DAO THAT IN NEAR FUTURE ANY DELIVERY FLIGHTS TO TURKEY OF AIRCRAFT ACQUIRED FROM UNITED STATES BE ROUTED OTHER THAN THROUGH ATHENS FIR OR AT LEAST NOT OVER GREEK TERRITORY OR WATERS. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT HELLENIC AIR FORCE COMMAND (HAFIC), WHICH CURRENTLY ACCEPTING ALL SUCH REQUESTS, WOULD REJECT ANY REQUEST TO LAND ON GREEK AIRFIELDS OR OVERFLY GREEK TERRITORY FOR AIRCRAFT OF THIS DESCRIPTION. SIMILARLY, AND ASSUMING SELLER UNDERTAKES TO DELIVER, WE WOULD EXPECT ANY REQUEST MADE BY GOI OR FRG FOR LANDING OR OVERFLIGHT PERMISSION TO BE REJECTED.

4. WE UNDERSTAND THAT UNLIKE SOME OTHER AIRCRAFT F-104'S WOULD NOT HAVE RANGE TO MAKE CIRCUITOUS FLIGHT FROM ITALY AROUND GREECE TO TURKEY, NOR WE ASSUME WOULD ITALAIN AND GERMAN F-104'S HAVE AIR-TO-AIR REFUELING CAPABILITY. THUS, ANTICIPATED GREEK REFUSAL WOULD EFFECTIVELY PREVENT FERRY FLIGHTS OF AIRCRAFT TO TURKEY, THEREBY ADDING YET ANOTHER IRRITANT TO RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY.

5. SINCE SALE BY GOI, AND FRG OF AIRCRAFT AND USG APPROVAL OF TRANSFER WOULD PROBABLY CREATE IMMEDIATE EXPECTATION ON PART OF GOT THAT AIRCRAFT COULD BE ADDED TO TAF INVENTORY, WE WOULD SUGGEST THAT BEST WAY TO AVOID CREATING PROBLEM IS TO PLAN FOR SEA DELIVERY OR TO DEALY DECISIONS ON SALE AND TRANSFER FOR TIME BEING.
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